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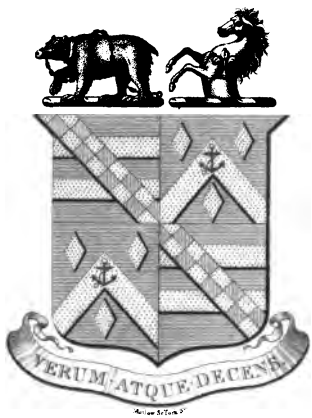

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Mes Chers Sœurs auteurs de
Le Semeur Saint

MEDITATIONS

AND

PENITENTIAL PRAYERS,

WRITTEN BY

The celebrated Dutcheſs DE LA VALLIERE,
Miſtreſs of LEWIS the Fourteenth of FRANCE.

After her Recovery from a dangerous Illneſs, when ſhe firſt formed the Reſolution of quitting the Court, and devoting herſelf to a Religious Life.

Tranſlated from the FRENCH.

With ſome Account of her Life and Character, extracted from *Voltaire*, *Sevigné*, and other Writers of that Time.

By Mrs. CHARLOTTE LENNOX.

Printed for J. DODSLEY, in Pall Mall.

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OF OXFORD

MEDITATIONS

AND

PENITENTIAL PRAYERS,

BY

The Dutcheſs DE LA VALLIERE.

THE

LIFE

OF THE

Dutcheſs DE LA VALLIERE.

THE Czar Peter the Great, we are told, impelled by an eager curioſity to ſee the woman whom Lewis the Fourteenth had loved, viſited Madame de Maintenon at Saint Cyr, languiſhing as ſhe then was under the decrepitude of age; and,

drawing aſide the curtains of her bed, contemplated her ſome moments with a fixed attention. The Dutcheſs de la Valliere, author of the following devout meditations, was doubtleſs an object far more intereſting, and more worthy the notice of that inquiſitive and ſagacious Emperor. Lewis the Fourteenth had loved many women; but Madame de la Valliere loved only him, and was, perhaps, the only royal Miſtreſs the world ever ſaw, who loved the Monarch for himſelf, independent of his power and greatneſs. Her whole life, before her retirement in a cloiſter, was a continual conflict between her paſſion and her duty. She loved Virtue, even while ſhe tranſgreſſed its laws; and

and that ſalutary remorſe, which never quitted her amidſt the intoxication of guilt, laid the foundation of a repentance as eminent as her crime had been. Modeſt, gentle, without any deſire of being diſtinguiſhed, ſhe deſpiſed adulation; ſhe required no homage; ſhe entered not into the cabals of the courtiers; ſhe never made a Miniſter, nor procured the diſgrace of one; her approbation did not hold the place of merit, her diſpleaſure might be incurred with impunity: ſhe withdrew from notice; ſhe was aſhamed of being a Miſtreſs, a Mother, a Dutcheſs. We ſhall never, ſays the Marchioneſs de Sevigné in her Letters, ſee her like again. When

drawn from dependance, and in full poſſeſſion of the King's heart, ſhe never thought of exacting vengeance on the perſons by whom ſhe had formerly been inſulted, which is uſually a Favourite's firſt exertion of power. She ſeemed not to know that ſhe had enemies; yet every day increaſed their number, by never ſoliciting the King for any favour whatever. She ſhunned ſociety; ſhe deſpiſed grandeur; all collected in herſelf, ſhe had no taſte for pleaſures; every thing but Lewis was indifferent to her. The magnificent ſhews and entertainments, which he was continually making for her, gave her no other ſatisfaction, ſays Voltaire, than that ſhe might obſerve the eyes of all

the ladies directed towards the King, and his fixed only upon her. Her fall did not habituate her to guilt; ſhe never forgot that ſhe lived in a criminal commerce with the man ſhe loved, and always hoped ſhe would be able to break it off — a Chriſtian ſentiment, which drew upon her at length all the treaſures of divine grace, and enabled her to paſs a long life in the auſterities of the moſt ſevere penitence, with the bleſſed hope of pardon and mercy.

This lady was not a perfect beauty; but ſhe was ſo amiable, one would imagine, it was her perſon that gave Fontaine the idea which he expreſſes in this line:

"Et la grace plus belle encor que ja
"beauté.

"And grace more beauteous even than
"beauty's ſelf."

Her perſon was remarkably genteel; there was in her leaſt motions an inexpreſſible grace, that inſenſibly captivated the heart; her hair, though of a colour very common, was particularly fine; her eyes a dark blue, bright, languiſhing, full of expreſſion; long black eye-laſhes ſoftened their luſtre, and gave them a look ſo ſweet, ſo tender, ſo modeſt, as inſpired at once reſpect and love; her face was rather too long, her mouth was not ſmall enough; but the colour of her lips was extremely beau-

tiful; her complexion was tolerably good; ſhe had an enchanting ſmile, fine hands and arms, and a ſhape wholly faultleſs: conſidered thus particularly, ſomething might be found amiſs; but altogether ſhe was beautiful. Her mind was ſtill more amiable than her perſon; all ſweet ſimplicity and native rectitude, ſhe had no caprice in her temper, no weakneſſes to correct; with the moſt refined delicacy of ſentiment herſelf, ſhe had not the leaſt ſhare of that kind of wit which wounds it in others.

Her fortune was but ſmall; her mother having married a third huſband, ſhe could not hope for an eſtabliſhment ſuitable to her birth. The intereſt of her relations procured

her the place of Maid of Honour to Henrietta Maria Dutcheſs of Orleans, ſiſter to Charles the Second of England; and in this gay Court ſhe had but too many opportunities of ſeeing and converſing with the King, who viſited his ſiſter-in-law frequently.

Unfortunately for Mademoiſelle de Valliere, ſhe ſuffered her heart to be touched with a paſſion for her Sovereign. Lulled into ſecurity by the innocence of her own thoughts, ſhe ſtrove not to repreſs this growing inclination. He was the only object of her meditations, the only ſubject of her converſation;—ſhe praiſed him with the enthuſiaſm of a lover, yet thought ſhe only ſpake of him as every other perſon did or ought

to

to do. The Maids of Honour, her companions, talked publicly of the tender ſentiments Mademoiſelle de la Valliere expreſſed for the King.—The Dutcheſs of Orleans neglected the report;—the Queen Mother imputed theſe little ſallies to the ſimplicity of her heart, and an imagination warmed by reading Spaniſh romances. The ſtory furniſhed matter for diverſion and raillery to the nobles of that diſſolute Court; but it made a deep impreſſion on Lewis, who, finding himſelf beloved independent of his greatneſs, felt the whole force of a charm ſo new and engaging. He thought it but juſt to love her, who had ſo freely beſtowed her heart upon him; and this knowledge made him find

find a thouſand charms in her perſon and converſation, which he had either overlooked before, or which at moſt had made but a ſlight impreſſion on him. His paſſion for Mademoiſelle de la Valliere became in a ſhort time ſo violent, and he was ſo incapable, or ſo unwilling, to conquer it, that all the Queen Mother could obtain of him by her remonſtrances was to obſerve ſome caution at leaſt towards the Queen his wife; a beautiful and deſerving Princeſs, who loved him entirely, and who was now far advanced in her firſt pregnancy. Lewis was mindful only of this part of her advice; his reſpect for the young Queen obliged him to have recourſe to ingenious fictions, to expreſs the ſentiments

timents of his heart. Mademoiſelle de la Valliere enjoyed, undiſtinguiſhed from the croud, the magnificent feaſts and diverſions, which were made only for her. The King employed every argument that love could ſuggeſt, every allurement that power, riches, and grandeur could furniſh him with, to ſeduce this unhappy young woman, whoſe acknowledged tenderneſs for him had led him to hope for a more eaſy conqueſt. Mademoiſelle de la Valliere wept inceſſantly. The idea of being pointed out as the Miſtreſs of the King made her tremble; pride, prudence, modeſty, thoſe powerful aids to virtue, ſtill ſupported hers, and ſet bounds to her love; ſhe afterwards

wards deviated from thoſe bounds, but never removed them entirely.

With tender and flexible minds, Virtue finds reſources under the influence of Paſſion itſelf.—A lady, who was nearly related to Mademoiſelle de la Valliere, awakened in her thoſe pious ſentiments which love had ſuppreſſed, but not wholly extinguiſhed. By her arguments ſhe was prevailed upon to prefer virtue to greatneſs, and to ſacrifice her inclinations to her duty. But whither ſhould ſhe fly? whither ſeek a retreat, without fortune, without protection, without any reſource — her ſoul divided between God and the world? She ſtill hefitated, and could neither

neither reſolve to leave her lover, nor conſent to ſacrifice her honour. She was at length fixed in her reſolution, by the continual remonſtrances of her friend; and had fortitude enough to go and ſhut herſelf up in the monaſtery of Chaillot, where ſhe deſigned to live unknown, ſecluded from the Court, the King, and the World.

The King was informed of the flight of his Miſtreſs, and made thoſe whom he ſuſpected to be acceſſary to it tremble at his rage. It was diſcovered that ſhe was at Chaillot; and the moment this intelligence was brought to him, he quitted the Spaniſh Ambaſſador, with

whom

whom he was then in diſcourſe, ran out of the palace, ſaddled a horſe himſelf, and, attended only by one of his pages, rode with eager haſte to Chaillot. He deſired to ſee Mademoiſelle de la Valliere:—the nuns denied his requeſt.—He threatened them with the ſevereſt effects of his diſpleaſure, if ſhe was not reſtored to him. She ought not to have yielded to this fatal interview;—the King's tears and intreaties prevailed. He brought her back in triumph; and gave the whole Court to underſtand, that he expected they would treat with the higheſt deference the woman he loved. The Queen his mother, meeting him during this inconſiderate tranſport, ſaid to him aloud,

aloud, with an air of indignation, "You are no longer maſter of yourſelf."—"Madam, replied the King, if I am not maſter of myſelf, I will convince thoſe who dare oppoſe me, that I am maſter of them."

The King, being determined to ſet himſelf free from reſtraint, would not permit Mademoiſelle de la Valliere to return to the Dutcheſs of Orleans. He created his Miſtreſs a Dutcheſs, formed her houſehold, and gave her the Hotel de Biron for her reſidence, which was magnificently furniſhed for her reception.

The

The two children ſhe had by the King were both legitimated. Mademoiſelle de Blois, who was long the delight and ornament of the French Court, had all the bewitching graces of Madame de la Valliere, the dignity of Lewis, and the wit and tenderneſs of both. The Count de Vermandois, whom they loſt at an early age, promiſed the ſame reſemblance.

In the midſt of all her grandeur, and the unbounded affection Lewis had for her, her heart was torn with conflicting paſſions; and that remorſe which ſhe ſo pathetically deſcribes in her devotions embittered all the moments of her guilty greatneſs: ſhe

ſhe felt, in its fulleſt force, the ſhame of her condition, and how deſpicable it was to be a Miſtreſs, though to the greateſt King in the world.

She continued however to be, for ſeveral years, the choice of Lewis, notwithſtanding ſome rambling amours which this licentious Prince indulged himſelf in:—theſe petty conqueſts indeed coſt him but little trouble.—He found few women who had virtue enough to reſiſt him; and always returned to her, who, by her engaging converſation and ſweetneſs of temper, by an undiſſembled love, and even by the force of habit, had made herſelf miſtreſs of his affections, without the help of artifice: but in

the year ſixteen hundred and ſixty-nine, ſhe perceived that the Marchioneſs de Monteſpan had ſupplanted her in the King's affections. She oppoſed her with her uſual ſoftneſs; and ſupported a long time, almoſt without complaint, the mortification of ſeeing her rival's triumph. The King inſiſted upon her not breaking with Madame de Monteſpan, with whom ſhe had long lived in the greateſt intimacy. She made to herſelf a law of his will; and this new favourite found all the complacency, all the ſofneſs of friendſhip, in a heart torn with the cruel agitations of an humbled rival. Madame de la Valliere, delivered up to the moſt violent deſpair, uttered only this

ſoft complaint, "Alas! they know not all the torments they give me!"

So many ſtifled ſighs, ſo many devoured tears, plunged her at length into the moſt profound melancholy. The cold reſpect with which the King treated her, was a new ſtab to her wounded heart;—ſhe diſcovered her reſentment no otherwiſe than by a precipitate flight from the Court, and withdrew into a Convent, there to weep at liberty. The Prince of Condé, who from a mal-content was become a zealous courtier, diſcovered the place of her retreat, and conjured her to return; but he could not prevail. Lewis was more ſucceſsful;—two words from his hand

brought back the irreſolute, and as yet but half-penitent Valliere; who, however, could not help ſighing out theſe words, as ſhe quitted the Convent, "Formerly he came himſelf to fetch me, and now I go to him."

This weak compliance had no other effect but to increaſe her rival's triumph, and her own mortification. She perceived but too plainly that there was no hope of re-gaining a heart which time had confirmed in indifference.

Every day, for many anxious months, ſhe exclaimed againſt that Court where her honour, her peace had been loſt—yet had not reſolution enough

enough to leave it. The deſire of ſeeing her children ſettled, the pleaſure of ſtill beholding the Prince to whom ſhe had ſacrificed all, or perhaps ſome remains of frailty, retained her.

Several ſplendid marriages were propoſed to her; ſhe rejected them all, reſolved that God alone ſhould fill up that place in her heart which the King had ſo long poſſeſſed.

A pious Friar receiving one day a conſiderable ſum of money from her, for a very uſeful eſtabliſhment, ſaid to her, "Madam, you are ſo charitable, that God will certainly have compaſſion on you—you have given

ſcandal to the world, you will one day edify it."

Theſe words increaſed her remorſe. She perceived with joy their ſalutary effect; and God, who at firſt ſeemed but ſlightly to touch her heart, rewarded her obedience to thoſe faint motions of his grace, by giving them at length power enough to triumph over all the allurements of ſin.

A dangerous ſickneſs, which ſeized her about this time, and from which ſhe recovered contrary to the expectations of her phyſicians, who pronounced her caſe deſperate, compleated the great work of her repentance

tance and reformation. While ſhe lay trembling under the horrors of approaching diſſolution — horrors which the conſciouſneſs of her paſt guilt increaſed tenfold, ſhe had leiſure to perceive the probable inefficacy of a death-bed repentance; and deeply vowed, if a little life was lent her, to employ it wholly in acts of penitence. God was pleaſed to hear her fervent petitions; her health was reſtored to her; and then it was ſhe committed to paper the following devout meditations; which ſo beautifully diſplay the emotions of a heart, where grace and nature, piety and paſſion, maintained for a long time a doubtful conflict; but which ended at laſt in a ſettled deter-

nation to quit the Court for ever, and devote herſelf to the auſterities of a religious life.

Accordingly ſhe left St. Germain's privately, and ſhut herſelf up in the Monaſtery of Chaillot; from whence ſhe wrote a letter to the King, dictated at once by piety, paſſion, and deſpair. She employed the Marſhal de Bellefands to deliver this letter to the King; intreating him, at the ſame time, to tell his Majeſty, "That, after having loſt his heart, ſhe would have quitted the Court, if ſhe could have prevailed upon herſelf to live without ſeeing him; that ſhe had been long influenced by that fatal weakneſs, and had with great difficulty

culty been able to take a reſolution of making a ſacrifice of herſelf to God; that the remains of her paſſion ſhould ſerve to increaſe her penitence; and that, after having given him her youth, the reſt of her life was not too much to be ſpent in the care of her ſalvation."

The King burſt into tears, and inſtantly ſent Monſieur Colbert to Chaillot, with an earneſt requeſt that ſhe would return to Verſailles, and give him the conſolation of ſpeaking to her once more—Madame de la Valliere obeyed. The Marchioneſs de Monteſpan ran to meet her with open arms, and eyes bathed in tears; the Dutcheſs tenderly embraced her rival,

rival, and conjured her to permit the King to live innocent. Lewis talked to her a long time in private, and came out of his cloſet with his eyes ſtill wet with tears. In this conference Madame de la Valliere had declared to him, that ſhe was abſolutely determined to retire for ever from the world.—" I know my own heart, ſaid ſhe;—I doubt its firmneſs—I feel the neceſſity of ſubjecting it by an irrevocable engagement — this is the beſt uſe it can make of its ſo late recovered freedom." The King repreſented to her the conſequences of a perpetual engagement; the delicacy of her conſtitution.—He endeavoured to perſuade her, that her charity might be more

more extenſive in the world than in a cloiſter. "I have taken my reſolution too fate for my honour, ſhe replied; but I truſt it is not too late for my ſalvation." Lewis, ſince he could gain nothing more, intreated her to make choice of an order leſs auſtere than that ſhe had fixed upon; or rather that ſhe would exerciſe her virtues in the government of a religious community. "Alas! anſwered ſhe, ſighing, can I, who have loſt myſelf, be capable of guiding others?" The Dutcheſs did not immediately quit the Court; her return, and her ſtay there, were not conſtrued to her advantage. Even the celebrated Marchioneſs de Sevigné, who was ſo great an admirer of her character, that

that ſhe declared Madame de la Valliere was a model for the Miſtreſſes of Kings, ſeems to cenſure her on this occaſion; for thus ſhe writes to her daughter the Counteſs of Grignion: "As for Madame de la Valliere, we are ſorry we cannot oblige you in ſending her back to Chaillot; but ſhe is as well or better than ever at Court, and ſo you muſt reſolve to let her ſtay there." And in another of her letters to the ſame lady: "The Dutcheſs de la Valliere talks no more of leaving the Court; it is enough to have ſaid it once; beſides, her women threw themſelves at her feet to diſſuade her from it, and then you know there was no holding out." The courtiers were

far

far from ſuſpecting the motive of her frequent journies to Chaillot. They rather ſuppoſed ſhe was employing all the arts of a refined coquetry, either to regain the King's heart, or to gratify her revenge, by diſengaging him at leaſt from the Marchioneſs de Monteſpan. But they were miſtaken: Religion was in full poſſeſſion of her ſoul, and ſhe had abſolutely determined to take the veil.

She executed this deſign with the magnanimity of a hero. The whole Court would be witneſſes of this ſacrifice, and even the Queen was preſent. The victim never appeared more lovely than in the inſtant ſhe was immolated; her beauty excited the

the admiration of all who beheld her in that affecting ſituation. The ſermon upon this occaſion was preached by the celebrated Boſſuet.—Even the courtiers burſt into tears, when Madame de la Valliere pronounced the vows, which ſecluded her for ever from the world, with the ſame graces, the ſame ardor, the ſame ſoftneſs and ſenſibility, with which ſhe had a thouſand times ſworn to Lewis an eternal love.

From that aweful moment ſhe ſuffered no regret for the world, which ſhe had quitted, to diſturb her repoſe.—She breathed not a ſigh for the Prince whom ſhe had ſo fervently loved;—ſhe wept only for her ſins,

and

and loved nothing but God. She paraphraſed that beautiful Pſalm, in which David deplores a crime more complicated than her's;—the ſentiments of faith, of love, of contrition, expreſſed by that penitent Monarch, were greatly below thoſe which the ſad remembrance of her fault inſpired. "Her converſion, ſays Voltaire, was as eminent as her guilty paſſion had been."

She continued ſtedfaſtly to wear hair-cloth, to walk bare-foot, to faſt with great ſeverity, and to ſing whole nights in the choir in an unknown tongue. She paſſed five and thirty years in thoſe auſterities, under the name of Siſter Louiſa of the Houſe of Mercy;

Mercy; greater in the eyes of the devout, and even in thoſe of the King, in her penitential habit, in humiliation at the feet of the altar, than when, ſeated near the throne, ſhe received the homage of a venal Court.—Her pleaſures had made up all her afflictions — her ſufferings gave her peace here, and a well-grounded aſſurance of happineſs hereafter. When the Biſhop of Condam was ſent by the King, to acquaint her with the death of their ſon the young Duke of Vermandois, "Muſt I then, ſaid ſhe, burſting into a flood of ſorrow, lament the death of that ſon, for whoſe birth I have not yet ceaſed to weep?" She entered upon her Noviciate the ſecond of June, 1674, took the

the veil the fourth of June, 1675, and died the ſixth of June, 1710. She bequeathed all her eſtates to Mary Anne of Bourbon her daughter, born at Vincennes October the ſecond, 1666, legitimated in 1667, and married, June the ſixteenth, 1680, to Lewis Armand Prince of Conti, who died without iſſue in 1685. The Princeſs died in 1739.

MEDITATIONS AND PRAYERS.

MEDITATION and PRAYER the First.

Upon our obligations to conſecrate that life to God's glory which we hold from his mercy; and the great care we ought to take leſt we ſhould be inſnared again into ſin.

WHAT ſhall I render unto my God, for reſtoring me to life and health; for reprieving me from

the gates of hell, and preſerving my ſoul; for all thoſe favours which he has vouchſafed to me his poor ſervant?

Shall it ſuffice, o my God! to acknowledge thy benefits?—will it be any recompence to employ the remainder of that time in thy ſervice, which hitherto has been ſpent in affronting the Majeſty of thy laws? or will the divorcing myſelf from thoſe guilty pleaſures, to which I was formerly wedded, ſatisfy thy juſtice, and blot out my tranſgreſſions? Oh! will it be ſufficient to ſecure me from eternal miſery, that henceforward I aſpire to eternal happineſs only, the contemplation of

thy divine perfections, and the enjoyment of thoſe unſpeakable delights, which are at thy right hand for evermore!

Let one ray of thy all-piercing wiſdom enlighten my reaſon, clouded by thoſe miſts of paſſion which miſled my erring ſoul. Oh! let thy grace penetrate that heart once glowing with impure deſires!—break thoſe fetters which bound me to the idol of my ſinful affections!—miſerable ſlave that I am to ſenſual luſts, let faith in thy unbounded mercy emancipate me, that I may pray to thee in full confidence of being heard, pardoned, and relieved.

Oh! let me never forget that dreadful hour, when, wrapt in the ſhades of death, my terrified conſcience reproached me with my miſ-ſpent life, and bad me prepare to meet eternal puniſhment. What did it then avail me, that I had been young and beautiful; the idol of a looſe and venal court; adored by that ſovereign one, to whom all the reſt paid homage?—Oh! fatal grandeur, purchaſed by the loweſt abaſement!—oh! dear-bought pleaſures, whoſe price was the ruin of an immortal ſoul! Did recollection, in thoſe tremendous moments, furniſh me with one ſource of comfort? could the tears of my royal ſeducer waſh away

away my ſtains, and calm my anguiſh for having offended the King of Kings? could the ſoothings of my friends — friends, alas, only to my guilty greatneſs — leſſen my terrors? could their officious ſervices ſnatch me from inevitable fate?

Thy infinite compaſſion, o my God! ſerved me in that hour of unutterable diſtreſs. In the midſt of judgement thou didſt remember mercy; and reſcuedſt my trembling ſoul, juſt hovering on the brink of everlaſting pains. Oh, ſuffer not the joy I feel for my returning health, to weaken the impulſes of thy grace, and reconcile me to the world, which, with ſuch ſeeming ſincerity,

I renounced, while the terrors of death hung upon me; eraſe for ever from my mind thoſe vain ideas, ſuggeſted by my guilty paſſion; nor ſuffer them to aſſume the place of the ſolid truths which, by thy mercy, are written there.

MEDITATION and PRAYER the Second.

She paints the weakneſs and irreſolution of her own mind; and prays unto God to give her grace to overcome the remains of her frailty, and to enable her to approach him with a pure heart.

THOU haſt, o my God! turned back my ſteps from the gloomy paths of death: thou haſt reſtored the health of my body; oh! reſtore the health of my ſoul, and enable me to deſire of thee, above all things, that rational and holy joy,

which the viciſſitudes of theſe ſublunary things cannot deprive me of — the joy of ſeeing myſelf redeemed from the ſlavery of ſin, to the glorious freedom of a ſincere Chriſtian, and led by the hand of thy providence to my heavenly Canaan. Oh! purify my heart with thy grace, that ſpirit and principle of action which, having waſhed us clean in the blood of our Saviour, ſupplies us with ſtrength to perſevere to the end, in the way of his commandments.

For, alas! what will become of thoſe vows, which I made unto thee when my ſoul was filled with fear; when death came to ſurprize me amidſt the intoxication of guilt; and a barren

a barren repentance without time for reformation, the only ſure criterion of its ſincerity, the only reaſonable ground for hope of pardon, was my weak ſubterfuge againſt deſpair? Ah! what will avail thoſe vows, poured forth in anguiſh, and produced by fear; unleſs thou, o Lord, wilt ſanctify them by thy grace? Print them indelibly on my mind; fix them for ever in my thoughts, that I may be enabled to avoid thoſe ſnares laid for my ſoul by my inviſible enemies, the emiſſaries of that arch fiend, who taught the angels to ſin.

O Lord! who ſuccoureſt the poor in ſpirit, thoſe who approach thee

thee with an humble and contrite heart; who, conſcious of their unworthineſs, and the inſufficiency of their beſt works, look up with trembling hope and humble faith, to thoſe gracious terms of pardon obtained by the mediation of thy bleſſed Son!—weak and miſerable as I am, oh! let me rely wholly upon thy grace for health and comfort; thy grace, that infallible medicine againſt the contagious blaſts of ſin; which, when it has healed, will ſanctify my ſoul, and preſerve it in immortal ſtrength and vigour.

But, o my God! while I implore theſe bleſſings of thee, endue me with a ſuch frame of mind as may incline

incline thee to give ear to my petitions, and render me a fit object of thy mercy.

Prepare yourſelves, o my body, my ſpirit, and my ſoul, to appear before your Maſter, and your God: to the end, that he may apply that divine medicine which will make you whole.

For how dare I approach the Holy of Holies without preparation; and intrude myſelf, miſerable ſinner as I am, into the preſence of my God?

O Lord, make me ſenſible of my want and miſery; of thy majeſty

jeſty and love, before I come to this heavenly banquet, where I ſhall eat and drink either my eternal health or my damnation.

MEDITATION and PRAYER the Third.

She pathetically laments the loſs of her innocence; expatiates upon thoſe virtues which are neceſſary to a Chriſtian; and, likening herſelf to the guilty Samaritan woman and to Mary Magdalen, earneſtly prays, that as ſhe has followed them in her ſins, ſhe may likewiſe imitate them in the ſincerity and fervour of her repentance.

NOW that, by thy grace, o Lord, I am become ſenſible of the enormity of my paſt life; teach

teach me with what degree of anguiſh and remorſe my ſoul ought to be affected for its offences againſt ſo good, ſo great a God. O days of uncorrupted innocence, ye never can return!—but in your place let repentance, deep and unfeigned repentance, ſupply that purity of mind and body, which once made me bluſh and tremble at the bare idea of ſin.

Teach me how I may offer up a pure and agreeable ſacrifice to thee, having a mind ſtill ſmarting with its former wounds, while pleaſure ſpreads her dangerous allurements, and, ſpite of all my reſolution, calls forth involuntary

luntary ſighs, while I avoid her ſnares.

Oh! teach me how I may lodge thee in the temple of my breaſt, from whence, with ſuch difficulty, I have juſt now chaſed thy moſt inveterate enemies!

Alas! it is not for a notorious ſinner like me, whoſe repentance is without fruits, whoſe love is ſtill divided, to be made partaker of that Chriſt who died for ſin!—let me then defer coming to the table of the Lord, till I am duly prepared, leſt I commit a horrid ſacrilege! Oh! let thy grace inſpire me with ſuch a hatred of ſin, as may confirm my reſolution

to abſtain from every thing that diſpleaſeth thee.

Give me that humble and contrite ſpirit, whoſe groans thou doſt never reject. Give me thoſe ſelf-ſame diſpoſitions, with which the poor Canaanite proſtrated herſelf at thy feet.

Look upon me, o Lord, while I approach thee, as thou didſt look upon that humble ſtranger: me, who am, in my own eyes, but as a poor dog, who is ſufficiently favoured, when permitted to pick up the crumbs which fall from the table where thou feaſteſt thine elect.

Oh!

Oh! look with compaſſion upon this poor offender; who, like the Samaritan woman, being inflamed with a ſenſe of her ſins, beſeeches one drop of living water to quench the fervour of her ſoul.

But, above all, incline me to imitate, in my repentance, that Mary Magdalen, whoſe looſe life, alas! I have but too cloſely imitated: like her let me wipe thy feet with my hair; and, by endeavouring to love thee much, make ſome poor, ſome ſmall return to thy love in forgiving me ſo much.

Deal with me as thou haſt dealt with thoſe three holy penitents, whom thou haſt made eternal witneſſes of thy mercies; that by theſe examples I may be taught, what truſt ought to be put in thy goodneſs. Fit me for approaching thy holy table, and participating of thy divine myſteries; give me a lively and a conſtant faith, which may produce in me an univerſal obedience to thy law, the ſolid foundation of my eternal welfare.

MEDITATION and PRAYER the Fourth.

On the nature and ſtability of the faith neceſſary to true repentance.

GIVE me then, o Lord, a lively faith, which may animate all my actions, and notwithſtanding my weakneſs, nouriſh thy love and thy grace in my ſoul; a ſtedfaſt faith, whereby I may ſincerely believe thy holy word; and, when the world allures me with its temptations, will remind me that no man can ſerve two maſters.

Give me, o Lord, an enlightened faith, which may render the grandeur of this world contemptible to me; and make it clear to my poor reaſon, that the faſhion of this world paſſes away, and that there is nothing ſolid and laſting, but piety alone: for, alas! my beſt reſolutions are fleeting and inconſtant, like the flowers of the field, which to-day are, and to-morrow are cut down and withered.

O Lord! who delighteſt in acts of mercy, and who alone canſt change the heart, turn my inconſtancy into a ſettled reſolution of ſerving thee, and

and my irregular paſſions into an earneſt purſuit of thy love.

Oh! ſuffer me not to impoſe upon myſelf in this great work of my repentance, and fondly imagine that I am diſguſted with my guilty paſſion, becauſe I baniſh myſelf from the unfaithful object of it. Let me not miſtake an effort of pride, for a reſolution inſpired by contrition; but do thou, o Lord! purify my thoughts and deſigns; make clean my heart, and then, if holy purpoſes follow, I ſhall be ſure they are the genuine effects of thy grace; and by their permanency convince me that I am in the right road of ſalvation. Chaſe from my once intoxicated heart, thoſe le-

gions of vanities that poſſeſſed it, that henceforth it may be conſecrated a holy temple, and dedicated to the ſervice of my God.

Give me a diſreliſh for the ſweet poiſon of ſin, the ſeducing pleaſures of this world:—fortify my mind with ſtrength to avoid that ſunſhine of fortune, which ſooner diſrobes us of our innocence, than the moſt piercing blaſts of adverſity. Let me look up to no other God, or Providence, but thee alone.

Chaſten me, o Lord, for my paſt offences; but not in thy diſpleaſure, leſt my trembling ſoul, overwhelmed with a ſenſe of my unworthineſs, abandon

abandon itſelf to deſpair.— Oh! let me look up with humble hope to that infinite mercy which raiſed this ſinking frame, when it was juſt ready to mingle with its original duſt; that the poor deluded mind which animates it, might have time to forſake its errors, and perfect the great work of its ſalvation.

So let me underſtand thy gracious reprieve from death; ſo let me uſe that ſpace, whether long or ſhort, thy will allots me here:—and, o my God, I beſeech thee, never ſuffer me to become ſo raſh, and ſo ungrateful to thee, as to fancy myſelf the author of thoſe reflections which I ſometimes make, when I withdraw myſelf from

from the hurry of this world, where, I may obſerve, an unquenchable appetite for its vain honours and delights torments the happieſt perſons, and renders them miſerable even by the gratification of their moſt earneſt deſires.

MEDITATION and PRAYER the Fifth.

Fearful of being deceived by her own heart, and of miſtaking the true motive of her repentance, ſhe prays to God to preſerve her from the deluſions of vanity.

WHAT am I, my Lord, and my God! what am I but a poor atom, a blind and wretched creature, who continually goeth aſtray when thou withholdeſt the light of thy ſpirit? I deſerve to be annihilated, if at any time I ſhould attempt the con-

converſion of myſelf by any power but that of thy grace.

Mortify in my ſoul all vain-glory, every thing that tempts me to have too good an opinion of myſelf; ſuffer me not to relapſe into that vivacity of converſation and behaviour, which drew empoiſoned flatteries on me, and ſerves only to divert me from thy ways; which deprives me of the benefit of my afflictions, and the ſweet conſolations of thy holy ſpirit.

Give me humility and diſtruſt of my own reaſon; let me thirſt after piety more, and wordly knowledge leſs; leſt, valuing thoſe trifling acquiſitions more

more than thy grace, I loſe myſelf; and, inſtead of becoming a good Chriſtian, become a philoſopher better acquainted with the maxims of Ariſtotle and Deſcartes, than the knowledge of the croſs.

Alas! how vain and deceitful are the thoughts of man, unleſs guided by that wiſdom which is from above; that wiſdom which is fooliſhneſs to the world, becauſe the world is unacquainted with it; that wiſdom, which God has concealed from the proud, and diſcovered to the ſimple; that wiſdom which laughs at human ſubtilty, and acts only by the power of grace; in a word, that wiſdom which is produced by the fear of God, and which

which is the beginning and the end of all true knowledge.

Permit me not, o my God! to flatter myſelf that I hate all ſin, becauſe diſentangled from the ſnares of guilty paſſion — I ſhudder at the remembrance of my paſt tranſgreſſions.— Still the arch enemy of mankind holds out baits for my unwary ſoul, ſo much the more dangerous, as they appear innocent; but alas! too, too guilty, if they withdraw my ſteps for a moment from thy paths.

Let me not flatter myſelf that I have mortified all my paſſions, becauſe I am no longer the ſlave of love:—for, alas! that very conqueſt leads

leads to the commiſſion of new faults, when it inclines me to that ſelf-complacency which is the height of vanity; ſo much the more dangerous, as by juſtifying theſe irregular motions of my mind, it renders me deaf to the voice of reaſon, and unfit for the holy inſpirations of thy grace.

Let me not ſuppoſe that I am no longer proud and ambitious, becauſe I deſpiſe the world, and ſcorn to owe thoſe honours fortune has ſtripped me of, to any thing but my own deſerts.

Suffer me not ſo fatally to deceive myſelf, as to think I am thoroughly con-

converted, when indeed I have only changed the ſins of ſenſe for thoſe of the mind; a prophane and ſenſual life, whoſe ſofteſt pleaſures were embittered by remorſe; whoſe brighteſt ſcenes were clouded by my reflections on the crimes that purchaſed them; for a life in which, unperceived by myſelf, I am continually gratifying my preſent predominant paſſions, while ſelf-love daily holds up a flattering mirror to my eyes, and repreſents all my actions virtuous, becauſe they are no longer flagrantly wicked:—thus do I loſe my precious time, forget my God, hazard the ſalvation of my ſoul, and attain to no higher perfection than the morality of a heathen, which alone

alone will not ſave me in the day of judgement. — Oh! ſtate truly deplorable! and the more ſo, as I am not ſenſible of the danger of my condition; but reſt ſatisfied without endeavouring after any other repentance or converſion.

MEDITATION and PRAYER the Sixth.

Upon the great difference between a worldly life and the ſuffering life of Jeſus Chriſt;—ſhe prays for ſuch an humble frame of mind as may render her indifferent to the honours and ſplendor of a Court.

TEACH me, o Lord! that this ſort of life is not the life of a Chriſtian; and that the end of Chriſt's incarnation and death was not to ſecure to us the enjoyment of this world's pleaſures, the gratifications of ſenſe, and the indulgence of the

fleſh. Oh! make me comprehend that all moral virtues are but dead works, unleſs animated by the virtue and the merits of Jeſus Chriſt:

That, unleſs the inclinations of the heart are changed, it will nothing avail a ſinner to reform his outward converſation; to hate the world, without loving God; to do works of juſtice, without ſincere repentance; and, as the Royal Pſalmiſt has it, "to ceaſe from evil, without doing good."

At the ſame time, O my God! that thou rooteſt out my ſinful habits, plant in their ſtead ſuch graces as may be fruitful to good works. Grant

that I may meditate on the myſteries of thy life and paſſion, with a firm faith in the all-righteous atonement made by them; that my ſoul may be deeply affected with thy infinite goodneſs, when I contemplate thoſe ſufferings which thou didſt willingly undergo for my ſake.

That, with the eye of faith, beholding the Divine Infant lying on the ſtraw, and in a manger, the treaſures of heaven veiled in the poverty of the earth, I may contemn thoſe riches which we can enjoy but for a few moments, and earneſtly endeavour to obtain thoſe everlaſting poſſeſſions, "which moth and

and ruſt do not corrupt, and which will never fly away."

That the conſideration of that private life, in which thou waſt pleaſed to diſguiſe thyſelf from the eyes of the world, may create in me a deſire of being forgotten by it; may fix my purpoſe of quitting it, that I may ſeclude myſelf in ſome holy retirement, and employ my remaining time in the great buſineſs of my ſalvation.

That the receiving thy holy body and precious blood, thoſe ſacred pledges of thy love, which thou waſt pleaſed to leave us when thou gaveſt thy life for our offences, may pro-

duce in me a holy horror and hatred of ſin, which was the cauſe of thy death.

That, far from lamenting my fall from greatneſs, I may rejoice and be exceeding glad, when I ſhall be diſgraced and contemned; remembering my Saviour's humility, who was mocked and ſet at nought by Herod and the Court; where he never appeared but once, and then on purpoſe to be deſpiſed.

That thoſe ſcourges, which rent thy ſacred body; thoſe thorns, which pierced thy precious head, may penetrate my callous heart, render me truly penitent, and willing, for the

love

love of thee, to undergo all thoſe rigors of ſelf-denial and mortification which are requiſite for the total ſubjection of my guilty paſſion.

Finally, that the conſideration of thy powerful death upon the croſs, on which thou didſt perfect the work of my ſalvation, in grief and miſery, may be my only hope and refuge.

MEDITATION and PRAYER the Seventh.

What kind of hope a true penitent ought to entertain.—She rejoices in her afflictions, and prays that they may be ſanctified to her.

O GOD! I beſeech thee, for the merits of that precious blood which flowed from thy ſacred wounds, and which thou didſt offer to the Eternal Father for the price of my redemption, that thou wouldſt be pleaſed

pleaſed to give me a true hope in thy mercy. Yea, Lord, I ſay a true hope; becauſe there is nothing more common, than for ſinners to abuſe thy mercy, making it an encouragement to ſin more ſecurely, relying on thy goodneſs, without ſo much as endeavouring to repent of their miſdeeds, and going on in the commiſſion of ſins, in confidence of impunity; though hereby they would make God unjuſt, and rather the refuge and confidant of their crimes, than the protector of innocence and virtue.

Now, while thy thunder has awakened me, and thy rod corrected me:

Now,

Now, while I am ſenſible of the wickedneſs of my life, the dangerous condition of my ſoul, and am convinced that there is a heaven, a hell, and an eternity:

Now, while I am ſenſible that all thoſe pleaſures, which intoxicated my ſenſes, and led my reaſon captive, were but vanities: — Now, while I am inflamed more than ever with an ardent deſire of being ſincerely converted unto thee, teach me, o Lord! that as thou art a God full of compaſſion towards thoſe ſinners who rely humbly on thy mercy, and return to thee with their

their whole heart; ſo thou art a terrible God to thoſe who preſume on it, only to multiply their offences; and, after having taſted the ſweet comforts of thy holy ſpirit, ſcorn and neglect it; for it is not, Lord, of ſuch miſerable wretches that thou ſayeſt, "To thoſe that knock, it ſhall be opened."

Oh! rather is it not of ſuch rebels of whom thou haſt declared, "That thou wilt withdraw the bowels of thy mercy?"

Is it not theſe impious wretches thou haſt threatened, that thou wilt "mock at their calamity;" and that

that in their laſt hour, inſtead of finding the compaſſion of a tender father, they ſhall experience the juſtice of an angry God?

MEDITATION and PRAYER the Eighth.

What effects a true repentance will have upon our life and converſation.—She prays to God to direct her in the choice of a holy man, for her confeſſor and guide.

THAT I may ſilence thoſe ſuggeſtions of vanity, by which the devil taketh occaſion to rob me of thy grace; grant, o my God! that inſtead of ſearching into my corruption, for palliating remedies to ſkin over my wounds, I may place

place myſelf at the tribunal of thy juſtice, and there apply thoſe cauſtics, which are neceſſary to conſume the gangrene and rottenneſs of my ſoul.

O Lord, permit me not to be deceived, or rather let me not take pleaſure in deceiving myſelf, by vainly hoping that I can make any atonement for ſuch an unchriſtian life as mine has been; ſuch ſcandalous and criminal paſſions as I have ſuffered to gain dominion over me; while I continue in the ſame ſinful habits, the ſame opportunities, the ſame pleaſures, and oh! perhaps the ſame crimes too.

Let

Let me not add, to the heap of my ſins, the diſbelief of thy Goſpel, the interpreting it according to my own imagination, or adapting it to countenance my enormities.

O Lord, how do I diſhonour thee by my works, while my mouth praiſes thee! while I boaſt that I am a Chriſtian, I act contrary to thy holy law, and every day renounce thoſe vows which I made unto thee in my baptiſm.

Thou puniſheſt me, my Lord and my God! thou puniſheſt me for my ingratitude, by ſuffering me to fall from one precipice to another; from

neglect of thy grace, to error and hardneſs of heart. Oh! while I am thus bewildered in the miſts of error, permit me not to chuſe a mountebank inſtead of an able phyſician, who can apply proper remedies to the inveterate maladies of my ſoul.—Let me find a learned, prudent, and pious guide, who can inform my judgement, and underſtands when to abſolve me; and not a blind and deceitful guide, who corrupts thy holy word, bends the goſpel-rule to my ſinful paſſions inſtead of faſhioning me to it, and endeavours more to pleaſe, than to ſave me;—who, by his readineſs to give me abſolution, lulls me into a falſe peace, becomes the partner of my

ſin,

ſin, the cauſe of my damnation, and an inſtrument of the devil, rather than the ſervant of Jeſus Chriſt.— For, o Lord! in that day, when all the ſecrets of our hearts and all the evaſions of ſelf-love ſhall be laid open, thou wilt not then judge me by the maxims of my ghoſtly guide; but by thy holy Goſpel, and that light which thou haſt given me; which I have ſo often rejected, while the fatal allurements of ſin, made me unwilling to have the darkneſs of my mind diſpelled.

Thou wilt judge me by thoſe ſacred truths, which, in ſpite of my corruptions, have pierced to the bottom of my ſoul; that remorſe

which thou didſt mingle with my moſt criminal pleaſures, thereby to recall my heart; but, alas! I always ſtifled them, that I might the more freely abandon myſelf to my deſtructive paſſions.

And laſtly, o my God! it is by the book of my own conſcience, and not that of my ghoſtly guide, by which thou, my ſovereign Judge, wilt pronounce my ſentence at that terrible day, when the whole world ſhall know their doom.

MEDITATION and PRAYER the Ninth.

The benefits ſhe derives from her afflictions. She conſiders proſperity as a puniſhment, when it alienates her thoughts from God. She earneſtly prays for pardon and mercy.

O LORD! ſince I have no means left to appeaſe my Judge, and to avoid the ſentence of death; but by condemning myſelf:

Grant, that I may examine myſelf before the tribunal of thy juſ-

tice:—grant, that by a ſincere repentance, and unfeigned ſorrow for my ſins, I may appeaſe thy wrath, and avert thy vengeance; and ſuffer me not ſo fatally to deceive myſelf in my repentance, as to oblige thee to judge me a ſecond time, and puniſh me in the day of thy fiery indignation.

O Lord! ſpread into a flame that ſpark of thy grace which remains in my ſoul, and which ſometimes makes it ſigh within itſelf.—Change my pleaſures into bitterneſs, my proſperity into affliction, that I may thereby be aſſured thou haſt changed thy hatred into love; and that I may not, in this dawn of my repentance,

find

find a tranquillity more terrible than in miſery itſelf.

Tell thyſelf, o my ſoul, that nothing can be more fatal to thy ſalvation, than to be deceived in thy converſion; and to ſet up thy defence in thoſe corrupted maxims of morality, which are big with more certain ruin than debauchery itſelf.

For can there be a more dangerous ſickneſs, than that which makes us reject all remedies; a more deſtructive miſtake, than reformation in appearance only?—O Lord! again, I beſeech thee, chaſten me not in thy diſpleaſure, as thou doſt thoſe

reprobates whom thou puniſheſt with proſperity, becauſe they would not participate of thy holy ſufferings.

Remember, o my God! that I am but duſt and aſhes; a fitter object of thy compaſſion than thy anger.

Have mercy upon me, o Lord! have mercy upon me! let thy mercy be proportioned to the heinouſneſs of my offences; and to thy loving kindneſs, which has no other object, no other bounds, than thy mercy alone.

Oh! give me a pardon which may blot out all my offences; that, ſanctified

tified by the blood of my Redeemer, I may preſent myſelf pure and ſpotleſs before thy judgement-ſeat, and enter into eternal life.

MEDITATION and PRAYER the Tenth.

She acknowledges, with grief, that her heart is not yet wholly freed from that unhappy paſſion to which ſhe had ſacrificed her innocence.—She bewails her weakneſs and irreſolution; and prays for a firm reliance on the all-atoning merits of her Saviour.

OH! fatal remains of a paſſion, which I vainly hoped I had overcome! ſtill will you mix your ſoftening influence with the ſeverity of

of thoſe reſolutions inſpired by a hatred of my former ſins, and a deſire of proving myſelf ſincerely penitent for them!—Thou, o my God! thou only, canſt preſerve me from the effects of this inconſtancy of mind, now yielding to criminal affections; now cheriſhing the impulſes of thy grace.—Oh! fix my wavering purpoſe, fill my whole ſoul, and ſuffer not the enemy of my ſalvation to uſurp one thought that is due to thee!—Oh! Saviour of mankind, who loveſt us more than we can love ourſelves; and who, out of thy infinite goodneſs, haſt reſcued me from a falſe and ſeducing hope, by which I ſhould have been flattered into a final impenitence; and thus haſt

haſt ſaved me, contrary to my own inclinations; give me, inſtead of that deſtructive hope, a ſolid confidence in thy divine mercies.—Let me conſider them as the only object of my truſt; and more eſpecially in thoſe moments of horror, when, by the artifices of the Devil, my ſins are ſet in terrible array before me, not to produce contrition, but to overwhelm me with deſpair; amidſt this bitterneſs, this anguiſh of ſoul, let me, with the eye of faith, contemplate my bleſſed Saviour dying on the croſs, to expiate my ſins; and let me reflect that thou didſt endure all this to obtain pardon for my offences, and to encourage me to the taking up of thy croſs, upon which depends all my hopes

hopes of ſalvation.—Let me, in thy ſacred wounds, contemplate the right which I, though a notorious ſinner, have to truſt in thy mercies: — let the hope of a bleſſed eternity, and the immutability of thy promiſes, take off my meditations from the vain and fleeting enjoyments of this world, which hinder my ſoul from aſpiring to everlaſting felicity.

For thou knoweſt, o my God! how little ſtability there is in my beſt deſires; and how ſpeedily the impreſſions of thy grace, on my heart, are defaced by the allurements of worldly pleaſure—

That

That my ſoul is ſtill tyrannized over by that fatal paſſion, the ſource of all my guilt and all my ſorrow—That vanity ſtill maintains its empire over my fooliſh thoughts, and fills me with ſelf-flattering ideas, when I behold the homage that is paid to my guilty greatneſs—That the honours and applauſe of this world make me giddy, and intoxicate me with the fumes of vain-glory.

Yes, Lord, thou knoweſt much better than I do myſelf, how ready I am to receive any impreſſion of evil; how averſe to any thing which is good; and how eaſily inclined to wander

wander from the way of thy commandments.

Hence it is, o Lord, that I put no confidence in myſelf; that my heart in all its wants, and in the day of adverſity, leans ſolely upon thee:—upon thee, o Lord! who enlighteneſt the darkeſt receſſes of my mind, poſſeſſeſt me with patience under the ſevereſt afflictions, and art indeed the anchor of my ſoul.

In thy mercy, my God! are my riches, my merit, and my refuge, when the conſideration of my wicked life fills me with dread.

Thy mercy is my comfort in this vale of tears and ſpiritual warfare,

wherein my ſoul is made the ſcene of various and conflicting paſſions.

It is the conſideration of thy goodneſs, which makes me hope more than fear; and rely more upon thy mercy, than tremble at thy juſtice.

MEDITATION and PRAYER the Eleventh.

God is our only help in time of trouble.—She prays for grace to receive his chaſtiſements as mercies vouchſafed for her eternal good; and above all implores, that her heart may be wholly filled with divine love.

O LORD! ſince I know by experience that thou art a ſure help to thoſe that truſt in thee; teach me in my greateſt extremities to

to rely on thee alone; teach me to rejoice in thy chaſtiſements, and to receive them as marks of favour, inflicted only for my benefit; aſſiſt me to bear them patiently, in full confidence that thou wilt not lay upon me more than I am able to endure; but wilt take thy rod from me when it ſhall be convenient for the health of my ſoul.

Let me be perſuaded that in thy own good time I ſhall, by the aſſiſtance of thy grace, remove all thoſe obſtacles which obſtruct my ſalvation: that my ſufferings, and the malice of my enemies, will have an end; but that thy mercies will endure for ever: that after I have fought

fought the good fight here on earth, I ſhall receive a crown of glory in heaven: for thou makeſt the rays of thy grace to ſhine upon the juſt and the unjuſt; which, at the ſame time that they melt down the humble ſoul into a ſincere repentance, they harden the habitual and obſtinate ſinner; to the end that the one may not be tempted to preſume, nor the other to deſpair; but all remain in a continual dependance upon thy grace.

Suffer me not then, my God! to be in the number of thoſe who will be aſtoniſhed and confounded at the great day, becauſe they have rejected

thy grace; for I caſt myſelf wholly upon thy mercy, which is infinite and knows no bounds, without any reſerve or confidence in my own merits.

But, o Lord! becauſe faith and hope, and all other virtues, will avail me nothing without charity; becauſe, though I could remove mountains, and work all ſorts of miracles, yet would my works be dead and ſinful, unleſs ſeaſoned by thy love:

Oh! give me then that charity which is the crown of all other virtues, and the ſoul of our good works:—give me a faithful and a fervent love of thee; then ſhall I

eaſily

eaſily overcome all ſeeming impoſſibilities, and ſatisfy the thirſt of my panting ſoul, for a ſincere converſion unto thee.

MEDITATION and PRAYER the Twelfth.

She deſcribes the thoughts and ſuggeſtions of a heart renewed by grace; and prays for ſuch a one.

FOR a foundation of this miraculous work, which is juſtly called the chiefeſt work of thy grace, create in me, o God! a new heart, an humble, yet a ſteady, reſolute, and courageous heart, eſtranged from the world, and all its fatal allurements;—a truly Chriſtian heart, which,

which, being filled with the love of thee, may enable me to expoſe my fortunes and even my life, for the confeſſion of thy name, and render me obedient to the fooliſhneſs of the croſs, in the midſt of a wicked and perverſe generation, with whom it is eſteemed a ſcandal to be religious:

A heart, which will love thee in the midſt of pains and ſufferings; reſiſting the concupiſcence of the fleſh, mortifying its corrupt appetites, and ſuppreſſing its irregular deſires:

A heart, which will love thee, when I am called upon to evidence that

love, by praying for my enemies, and returning them good for evil:

A heart, which, for the love of thee, will deny itſelf when there is any competition between the creature and the Creator, which will ſilence all the importunities of nature, that it may hearken to the voice of thy grace:

A heart, which, for the love of thee, will tear itſelf from the object of its deareſt affections; deſpiſe the ſplendour of the court, ſacrifice its fondeſt wiſhes, its alluring hopes, prefer thy ſervice to a life of grandeur, thereby demonſtrating, that

my

my love to thee, ſurpaſſes that which I have had for the world.

Laſtly, my God! grant that I may love thee, not only for thy favour, when thou bleſſeſt me with proſperity, and an abundance of the good things of this world; but alſo when I am in diſgrace, poverty, or any other affliction:—then let my ſoul love thee, when ſorrow preſſeth hard upon me, ſo that no repining thoughts may find acceſs into my mind; no preſumptuous murmurs paſs my lips; but let me bleſs thy chaſtening hand, and bow myſelf meekly to thy rod; finding all my comfort in ſubmiſſion to thy will, all my hopes in the riches of thy mercy.

For, o Lord! what teſtimonies can I give thee of my love, which are not infinitely ſurpaſſed by the leaſt of thoſe mercies which thou haſt ſhewn to me?

MEDITATION and PRAYER the Thirteenth.

If the ſoul finds any thing in this world worthy of its affections, how much more earneſtly ought it, when touched by grace, to fix them upon God!—She prays to be made capable of loving God alone.

LET me not have leſs gratitude, fidelity, and zeal towards thee, my God! than I ſhould have towards a friend who had offered to lay down his life for the preſervation of mine; and to this ſuperlative teſtimony of

his love, did continually add a thouſand other benefits.

Haſt thou not made me free offers of thy grace?— haſt thou not ſhowered mercies upon me?

Oh! then never let me forget thee, my Lord and my God! never let me doubt of thy mercy, and neglect to pay thee thoſe acknowledgements of thy love and bounty, which are but my reaſonable ſervice.

For is it juſt that I, who pretend to act upon principles of generoſity with the world; who boaſt of my good-nature, ſenſibility, gratitude, and integrity, towards my friends,

friends, ſhould be defective only in my duty towards my God?—My virtues not actuated by faith, my love not fixed and permanent, is it juſt that I, a poor miſerable creature, who owe all to my glorious Creator, ſhould offer up to him only faint acknowledgements, fickle deſires, and the leaſt part of that heart which ought to be wholly his?

Is it juſt that I, who have been ſo induſtrious to indulge my idol paſſions, who never forgot any thing that might contribute to their gratification, ſhould ſhrink at the difficulty of placing them upon their due object, and devoting my heart to the love of thee?

Oh!

Oh! is it poſſible that the ſoul, which thou didſt create to be the temple of thy divine love, ſhould be prophaned continually by ſenſual paſſion?— that the heart, which thou didſt faſhion for thyſelf, ſhould not return to thee, the center of its happineſs, after it has wandered a thouſand and a thouſand times from the way of thy commandments?— No, Lord! this is not poſſible; therefore, notwithſtanding all the oppoſition my corrupt nature makes to the eaſy yoke of thy commandments, the love of thee, which with joy I now feel and acknowledge to be greater than my love of the world or myſelf, ſhall unite me inſeparably

ſeparably unto thee, by the inexhauſtible merits of Jeſus Chriſt.

By that love, which has taught me by experience, that there is nothing in this world worthy my regard; nothing but continual troubles, baſe ingratitude, diſappointed hope, and unreaſonable fears; which by theſe gentle corrections haſt diſcovered to me, that thou art a jealous God, — that thou wilt not be ſatisfied with a divided heart, which now aſpires after the emanations of thy love — now fixes its ſacrilegious deſires on earthly objects, and yields alternately to the impulſes of grace, and the temptations of ſin.

O Lord!

O Lord! ſince to render me a fit object of thy mercy, thou requireſt nothing of me but repentance, and a zealous endeavour to cultivate thy grace, behold a heart ready to receive thy commands, ready to obey thee, which is indeed truly to love thee; ready to ſuffer any thing which tends to the advancement of thy glory, and the ſalvation of my ſoul.

MEDITATION and PRAYER the Fourteenth.

The danger of examining what ſins are damnable, and what are not.—A penitent ought to avoid all appearances of evil, every thing that may offend God; leſt, by indulging himſelf in ſmall deviations from righteouſneſs, he ſhould relapſe at laſt into habitual wickedneſs.—She laments her dangerous ſituation, ſurrounded with the pomp and ſplendour of a court; and prays for grace to perſevere in her reſolution of devoting herſelf to a religious life.

IF it be thy pleaſure, o my God! to make my ſorrow for my crimes in ſome degree adequate to the enormity of them; to prolong my life, and chaſtize me in the ſame place where my offences were committed; if it be thy pleaſure, to make my ſins my puniſhment, and my guilty paſſion the executioner of thy juſtice — my heart is fixed, o God! my heart is fixed. — Nevertheleſs, grant that, in this trying ſituation, I may preſerve my integrity; that my preſent averſion to ſinful pleaſures may be an antidote ſufficient to defend me from the infected breath of intereſted flattery, and the dangerous vanity ſuggeſted by popular applauſe

applauſe; that my repentance, and the reſolution I have formed, to devote my ſucceeding days to the auſterity of a religious life, may be more acceptable to thee, and profitable to myſelf.

But, o Lord! let me not only be preſerved from thoſe notorious crimes which this day render me the weeping object of thy mercy; but grant alſo that I may hate ſin, more for the malignity of its nature, than from my dread of its puniſhment.—Let my averſion to it proceed rather from my love to thee, than regard for myſelf: let me abhor it more, as being diſpleaſing to thee, than becauſe it would be my ruin.

Let me not, with the greater part of the world, nicely weigh how much carnal liberty I may indulge myſelf in, and yet continue in a ſtate of ſalvation; but let me carefully avoid every ſmaller deviation from righteouſneſs, as well as thoſe groſſer acts of ſin, to which thou haſt annexed eternal puniſhment.

For what can be more impious, O my God! than to ſay, I know that this action will diſpleaſe thee; that this temptation is alluring; that theſe pleaſures obſtruct the emanations of thy grace; and that the vanities of this world are at enmity with a life of piety; and yet reſolve to venture on

on them; to diſregard the all-ſeeing eye of a jealous God; the warnings of my own conſcience: and all this, becauſe I am aſſured that God is merciful; that he loves me, and is willing to overlook my offences.

For, alas! ſuch is the reaſoning of thoſe ſervile wretches, who fear their God more than they love him; who hate not ſin for itſelf, but dread of its conſequences, and then only perform acts of piety, when ſome impending danger threatens them.

Is not this, o God! impiouſly to reject thy grace?—may not not this offence, eſteemed ſo ſmall and venial

by thoſe who commit it, grieve thy holy ſpirit, and become the cauſe of their final reprobation?

Tell thyſelf, o my ſoul! that this is not the path to eternal ſalvation; that it is by tempting us to ſmaller crimes, the devil gets poſſeſſion of our hearts; and, by degrees, renders the moſt dreadful ſins familiar to us.—Oh! may I not, unperceived by myſelf, be ſtill entangled in his ſnares?—may not this continual reſort of gay and idle company, with which I am but too much pleaſed; this light and airy converſation, which ſtill captivates my fancy; may it not, in the end, weaken the influences of

thy grace, ſeduce me from the ſimplicity of thy word, and draw me aſide from the obſervation of thy holy law?—and may not thou, o my God! leave me to myſelf, when thou perceiveſt that my diſobedience and ingratitude towards thee, proceed from the abuſe of thy grace.

Alas! who knows but that the ſplendour of worldly grandeur, with which I am ſurrounded, which I ſtill behold with ſo much complacency; and thoſe maxims of carnal policy which are continually ſounded in my ears, may at laſt render me forgetful of the ſolemn proteſtations which but a few days ago, I made unto

thee, when, with tears and ſighs, I ſo earneſtly beſought thee to have mercy upon me, and to deliver me from the jaws of death?

MEDITATION and PRAYER the Fifteenth.

Conſcious that her affections are not yet wholly weaned from the Prince who ſeduced her; and that the pomp, the power, the honour, ſhe had been uſed to, ſtill maintained their influence in her heart; ſhe prays for freſh recruits of grace, to enable her to perform thoſe vows of penitence and reformation, which ſhe made in her ſickneſs.

O LORD! who art terrible only to ſtubborn and impenitent offenders, let not my ingratitude di-

vert the benign deſigns of thy mercy upon my ſoul!—let not that ſickneſs, by which thou didſt intend to awaken me to repentance, and bring me back to thee, harden my heart, and fill up the meaſure of my iniquities.

Let not the return of life, and health, bring along with it thoſe vicious habits, that inordinate love of pomp and pleaſure, which I ſo paſſionately renounced, when the terrors of death were upon me; when the recollection of my ſins, and the dread of hell's torments, made all my joints tremble, and my knees ſmite together.

Oh!

Oh! break aſunder thoſe bonds which unite my affections to him who has been the cauſe of all my guilt and all my ſorrow; and, in the place of that deſtructive paſſion, plant holy wiſhes, pious deſires, and ſacred love,

Oh! ſave me from myſelf; from that natural bias of my will to all that is evil, and that averſion to every thing that is good, which from time to time prevents me from perfecting my repentance,

Hear me, o Lord! when I cry unto thee, for freſh ſupplies of thy mercy;

mercy; and redeem me from the dangerous converſation of the world.

But above all, I beſeech thee, let that grace, that love, that bounty, with which my grateful heart is overwhelmed, kindly operate upon my thoughts; and when they have made me know and feel that my weak ſoul, ſtill enthralled by paſſion, is incapable of perſevering in thoſe pious reſolutions, which the terror of thy approaching judgements extorted from me; then let them accompliſh thoſe gracious purpoſes for which they were ſent by indulgent Providence!

Oh!

Oh! let not the hardneſs of my heart conſtrain thy mercy to give place to juſtice.—Let it not render thy fatherly corrections uſeleſs, or provoke thee to leave me to myſelf, and to the dangerous influence of my unmortified affections. — Grant me, with tears I beſeech thee, grant me thy love; for without it, I have no ſtrength, no merit; but, by its all-powful influence, I ſhall be enabled to ſubdue that fatal paſſion which has ſtill poſſeſſion of my heart, and remove all thoſe difficulties which now obſtruct the holy deſign I have formed of devoting my future life to thee.

MEDITATION and PRAYER the Sixteenth.

In the midſt of her afflictions, ſhe endeavours to cultivate that diſpoſition of mind which may turn them into benefits, by applying them to their proper uſe.—She prays for grace, to enable her to go through with the great work of her repentance.

ENLIGHTEN the faculties of my ſoul, o God! with one ray of that divine wiſdom. which will ſhew me the vanity of theſe tranſient enjoy-

enjoyments, and enable me patiently to bear my fall from guilty greatneſs.

Oh! what is it I regret?—the loſs of that dazzling favour, which to poſſeſs was my crime; the alienation of that heart, which never ought to have been mine; in a word, the power to ſin no more. Are theſe the calamities which fill my heart with anguiſh, and my eyes with tears?—are they not rather ſo many inſtances of thy mercy, which, by ſtrewing thorns o'er the too tempting paths of vice, oblige me to turn my reluctant ſteps to the rugged, but ſafe road of virtue?—It is by theſe trials, hard indeed for frail nature to endure,

endure, that thy all-gracious Providence interpoſes, to ſave me from deſtruction.—Oh! painful, but ſalutary, mortifications! let me rejoice that they have fallen upon me; let ſhame, and remorſe, add poignancy to the ſtings they have fixed in my heart, and perfect my repentance; which then only I ſhall know to be ſincere, when I ſhall truly rejoice in my preſent humiliation.

Theſe diſgraces are the effects of thy mercy, o my God!— they are benefits which I implored when, in my fervent wiſhes to forſake my ſins, I called on thee to help me. Oh! let a thorough change of heart be a ſure ſign of my amendment, by theſe

thy

thy wholeſome corrections: let a good life be the fruit of my repentance, and a reſolution to die a thouſand times rather than again to offend thee, be the effect of my earneſt deſires to devote myſelf wholly to thee.

And, although it is but too common for thoſe perſons, who in a moment would paſs from one extreme to another; from the moſt crying wickedneſs to the higheſt pitch of devotion, to be unſucceſsful in their endeavours, and finiſh nothing, becauſe they undertake too much:—yet I cannot ſet bounds to my deſires, o Lord! I cannot but wiſh to love thee, and thee alone; it is this which

which above all things I thirſt after; and to attain which, I beſeech thee, enliven my otherwiſe impotent endeavours, by the aſſiſtance of thy grace.

I will not, o my God! defer my repentance till the night of thy juſtice overtakes me, when no man can work; but I will be up and be doing, ſo ſoon as the day-ſpring of thy grace on high ſhall viſit me, and endeavour to work out my ſalvation.

I will not ask counſel of my paſſions, nor deliberate with my heart, whether it is time to forſake my ſinful habits, and become a new creature:

ture: nor will I be ſo vain as to think myſelf capable of great matters; for, alas! I feel my wants.—I am conſcious of my inactivity, my irreſolution, my fluctuating deſires, and unſteady purpoſes; therefore, with eyes lifted up to heaven, I will patiently expect the dawning of thy love, and the gentle influences of thy grace upon my ſoul.

MEDITATION and PRAYER the Seventeenth.

What kind of life that perſon ought to lead, who is under a neceſſity of converſing much with the world.— She prays to be preſerved from the contagion of ſin and vanity

I WILL begin to magnify thy mercies, o Lord! among thoſe who carry on a continual traffick of ſin and vanity; with whom my diſcourſe uſed to be of riches, honours, pleaſures, and proſperity.

I will

I will declare to thoſe perſons who worſhip nothing but their intereſt, that thou art my God! the only object of my adoration!—that in the enjoyment of thy favour, conſiſts all my riches, my grandeur, and my happineſs; that all my wealth is in thy hands; and that, when thou haſt perfected the great work of my converſion, I ſhall be happier than when I poſſeſſed the object of my fond, but guilty wiſhes; richer than when the wealth of provinces was at my diſpoſal; greater than when a ſplendid court paid me its ſervile adulation.

I will forſake that light and effeminate company, with whom I have loſt ſo much precious time; which I will endeavour to redeem, by convincing them from my own experience, that the vain, unprofitable, and idle courſe of life, which they look upon as the privilege of rank, and wealth, will plunge them into a ſad eternity of puniſhment.

If I cannot attain to be eminently pious, I will endeavour to be as good as I can; if I cannot produce the teſtimonies of a long-tried affection, I will dedicate to thee my infant love; if my faith be not ſo active as that of the humble centurion, which inclined

inclined thee to give a preſent return to his petition, I will have recourſe to the holy miniſters of thy word, and, with united prayers, implore the augmentation of it.

I will cloſe my eyes upon the dazzling glories of a court; I will ſhut my ears to the ſeducing flatteries of intereſted dependants:—and, oh! above all, I will bar up every avenue to my heart, againſt that fatal object of its ſenſual regards; and thou, my God! thou only, ſhalt be the object of my eternal adorations.

That I may lead a life conformable to thoſe religious principles which thou firſt plantedſt in my ſoul, and

which, till now, I have ſhamefully neglected to cultivate;—I will dread the approach of thoſe deluded wretches who, immerſed in ſin and folly, find all their heaven in ſenſual gratifications. Yes, Lord, I will break off all intercourſe with thoſe profeſſed libertines, whoſe converſations inſtill irreligion into our minds, and whoſe ſociety is a ſtain even to uncorrupted innocence; who ſtrengthen the ſuggeſtions of vanity, and exalt us into ſuch an opinion of our worthleſs ſelves, as merits the deprivation of thy grace, which is only beſtowed upon the humble; who gild over their monſtrous vices with the ſpecious names of good-nature, and honour; though their perſons are

but

but too agreeable to me, their wit but too alluring; yet will I ſhun the ſnare they lay for my ſoul, and faithfully perform thoſe vows which I have made to thee, o my God! and henceforwards maintain no friendſhip, familiarity, or correſpondence with them; for certainly the hating of thoſe who hate thee, is but a ſmall acknowledgement of thy infinite love.

MEDITATION and PRAYER the Eighteenth.

That to preſerve her mind for the future pure and undefiled, ſhe will aſſociate with ſuch perſons only as truly fear God; and never more entangle herſelf in thoſe things which the world calls ſtate, riches, and grandeur.

O Lord! in whoſe hands are the hearts of thy creatures, and who mouldeſt them according to thy good pleaſure, change the inclinations of mine, and ſanctify my thoughts;

thoughts; that, in the choice of my friends, I may more regard thy grace, than any natural endowments; that I may reliſh ſuch converſation, as will rather edify than amuſe; as may ſeaſon my heart with thy holy truths, rather than delight my imagination with the ſallies of wit: for oh! I know, I feel, that, inſenſibly, thoſe things which I frequenrly behold, make forceable impreſſions on my mind; that, unperceived by myſelf, I become conformable to the company with whom I converſe; and that example powerfully influences my life and converſation.

Enable me therefore, o my God! to find delight in the ſociety of virtuous,

tuous, and religious perſons only; where not the world, and its vanities ſhall be the ſubject of our diſcourſe; but faith, hope, eternity, the riches of thy grace, the immenſity of thy power, thy inexhauſtible love, thy infinite mercy, and thy aweful juſtice. And, oh! if the fatal impreſſions which ſin has left upon my heart, ſhould, for the preſent, render me averſe to ſuch pure and rational pleaſures; if the taint of my corrupt nature ſhould give me a diſreliſh to ſuch pious exerciſes, which, to a Chriſtian mind, yield more ſolid ſatisfaction, than the moſt refined gratifications of ſenſe; then, I beſeech thee, enlighten my underſtanding with thy grace, and ſtrengthen my

faith,

faith, that I may not fall back into my former wicked courſe of life, and indulge ſuch thoughts, as may render me incapable of receiving the ſacred impulſes of thy holy ſpirit.

It is not on my body that thou, o God! expecteſt I ſhould exerciſe any rigour, but on my corrupt affections; it is them that I muſt mortify; them I muſt ſubdue; and not fooliſhly imagine, I can compound for ſin, by penances I voluntarily inflict upon myſelf; by faſting to-day, and to-morrow rioting in luxury; devoting one part of my time to retirement and meditation, the other to gay amuſements and forbidden pleaſures:— ſeeing therefore that the moſt effectual way

to rectify my warped deſires, is to bend them to the contrary extreme, let me not only forbear to act a part in thoſe ſplendid ſcenes, where once I ſhone the foremoſt, but let me not even caſt a look that way; for it is but reaſonable, that I ſhould puniſh myſelf for my too earneſt purſuits of ſenſual pleaſure, by denying myſelf even lawful diverſions.—It is but juſt that I, who have trifled away ſo much time on the ſtage of the world, ſhould withdraw myſelf from pleaſures, which recall ideas that ought to be for ever baniſhed from my mind.

Let the certain aſſurance of a future life, where time ſhall be loſt in eternity,

eternity, ſhew me the weakneſs and abſurdity of employing one anxious thought concerning this momentary exiſtence here. How poor, how trifling, appear thoſe things which the world calls power, wealth, ſtate, and grandeur, to a mind that dwells with certainty on the enjoyment of an endleſs being! Let me not, with the greateſt part of mankind, engage all the force of my affections in the purſuit of theſe ſplendid trifles! let me eſtimate them according to their true value; but let me fix my hope upon that ſolid good, where laſting happineſs is to be found! It is religion only that opens a proſpect worthy the contemplation of an immortal ſoul:—thither let

all

all my wiſhes tend; there let all my deſires center; and, while I purſue everlaſting happineſs hereafter, let me deſpiſe the fleeting pleaſures of this tranſitory ſtate, and ſuffer, without repining, its momentary pains.

Let me contemplate the buſtling buſineſs of this world, as the ſcene of a vaſt drama, where fortune orders the perſons, diſpoſes the riches and honours, and ſooths into deluſion the greater part of mankind; who, being rouſed up at the end of the act, ſtand amazed to find, that all has paſſed as a dream; that the gaudy apparitions are vaniſhed, and nothing left but duſt and ſmoke:—ſo, Lord! I confeſs, with ſhame and remorſe

remorſe I confeſs, that, after having exhauſted all the ſtores of ſenſual gratifications, I can find no real ſatisfaction, no laſting pleaſure, but in ſerving thee.

MEDITATION and PRAYER the Nineteenth.

That charity towards our neighbour obliges us, not only to avoid carefully the doing any thing that may be injurious to his life, fortune, and reputation; but alſo all malignant ſarcaſms on his foibles, all idle ridicule of his peculiarities either in mind or perſon.

OH! that my ſoul might be wholly inſpired with thy love, my God! that it might be my only treaſure,

treaſure, my glory and delight; that thoſe chaſte and divine pleaſures, which flow from it, might enlighten my underſtanding, and allure my will to thee; that it might produce in me a hearty ſorrow for my paſt offences, and a holy fear of thy divine majeſty; that it might take full poſſeſſion of my heart, and not endure one darling luſt to lurk therein.

Oh! that my love to my neighbour, which thy divine command inforceth, might, in ſome meaſure, anſwer thy love to me; that I might pray with unfeigned zeal for the welfare of his immortal ſoul; and never be prevailed upon, by any proſpect of gain or advantage, to

wound my conſcience, by injuring him, either in his fortune or reputation.

But ſince, generally, nothing is called a breach of charity towards our neighbour, but ſuch open violence, or abuſive language, as a ſober heathen would bluſh for; ſince few of thoſe perſons, who yet profeſs themſelves Chriſtians, conſider as a crime againſt charity, thoſe pointed jeſts which give trembling emotions to the heart, and call up painful bluſhes to the cheek;—thoſe artful methods of leſſening his reputation, by inſinuating his frailties, and ridiculing the peculiarity of his manners, becauſe all this is done in ſport only,

only, and to amuſe our company;—therefore, I beſeech thee, O Lord! open my eyes to the immorality of theſe practices; convince me that what I am too apt to call pardonable infirmities, are dangerous ſins, which diſpleaſe thee the more, in that they are the unchecked growth of our corrupt natures, the indulged offſpring of our pride and vanity.

Let me heartily deteſt this miſchievous amuſement, to which I have been but too much addicted; let my ſorrow for this offence in ſome meaſure equal the delight I took in it; and let that which was the great incentive of my guilt, produce a fountain of tears to blot it out.

For is it not highly reaſonable, o Lord! that I ſhould bewail that mirth, which cauſed affliction to my neighbour; that I ſhould regret that laughter, which produced his tears; that I ſhould lament, with ſighs and groans, that wretched folly, which coſt him his reputation, and me my peace?—Is it not juſt that I, who cannot give any extraordinary demonſtrations of my repentance, ſhould teſtify at leaſt the ſincerity of my intentions, by abſtaining from every thing which may gratify my evil propenſities; that, by a prudent reſerve for the future, I ſhould endeavour to make ſome atonement for the former intemperance of my tongue;

tongue; and, by caſting off all thoſe ſins which have offended thee, invite thy return into the temple of my ſoul?

When therefore, o my God! I perceive myſelf falling back into my former habits of life; when I perceive thoſe painfully-ſuppreſt deſires reſuming their dominion over my mind; when my natural depravity begins again to bias my will and my affections; when my too faithful memory re-traces ſcenes of guilty pleaſures, and blows into a flame thoſe fatal ſparks, which, alas! though ſmothered, are not quite extinguiſhed in my ſoul?— then, ſen-

ſible of the danger of my condition, let me not confide in my own ſtrength, but have recourſe to thee with ſighs and tears, with fervent prayers, and hourly ſupplications;—let me not think myſelf ſecure becauſe my deſires have not yet proceeded to acts; but let me conſider, that if I do not ſtifle theſe firſt motions to ſin, I reſign my ſoul up to its moſt inveterate enemies; but if, on the contrary, I ſhall be careful to nip them in the bud; if, with all my ſtrength, I endeavour to ſacrifice my paſſion to thee, I ſhall incline thee to have mercy upon me, and to blot out my offences; I ſhall give thee the homage of a penitent and contrite heart,

heart, in which thou art well pleaſed. Teach me then, o Lord! that theſe are the fruits of repentance; theſe are the reſtitutions thou requireſt of me, and the choiceſt victims my love can offer thee.

MEDITATION and PRAYER the Twentieth.

The nature and neceſſity of prayer;— ſhe implores of God a fit diſpoſition for the performance of his duty.

O GOD! who takeſt delight in rewarding that ſervant who has been faithful in a few things, ſupply the indigency of my love, out of the abundance of thy goodneſs; let its ſhallow ſtreams be ſwallowed up in the vaſt ocean of thy divine charity, loſe themſelves in it, and be

be blended with it, ſo that it may never more be ſeparated.

For, oh! I confeſs my frailty; that my heart is an ungrateful and barren ſoil, producing nothing but weeds and thorns, unleſs cultivated by thy grace:— water it therefore, o Lord! with the dew of heaven, which gives fruitfulneſs to the plants, and paints the flowers; that powerful influence, which inclines our will, and affects our heart; which, after it has produced in our ſoul works of repentance, protects them from thoſe ſcorching beams, the flames of our luſts, and preſerves them ſafe unto the harveſt.

This

This is the comfortable hope that ſuſtains thy poor ſervant:—this is the earneſt deſire of her heart; which animates her to bear the toils of this tedious pilgrimage, while ſhe languiſhes in expectation of that everlaſting reſt, which thou haſt promiſed to the faithful.

But, that the inſpirations of thy Holy Spirit may have the deſired effect upon my ſoul; that I may receive them with ſuitable affections; that I may prepare my heart for the ineſtimable favours which thou art pleaſed to beſtow upon it; with eyes and hands raiſed up to heaven, I will meet theſe bleſſings—I will forſake

forſake every ſin that unfits me for them, and do all the good thy grace ſhall enable me to perform; and, that the ſtreams of thy mercy may never fail me, a poor thirſty ſinner, I will continually increaſe them with tears of penitence, and an affectionate grief for having offended thee.

And ſince prayer is the channel by which thou conveyeſt thy light and grace into our ſouls; ſince it is the moſt acceptable incenſe I can offer up unto thee for the obtaining of new mercies!—oh! teach me, heavenly Father, to pray unto thee with aweful reverence, with humble hope, with the adoration of all my faculties,

ties, and all the affections of my heart.

And, that I may perform this duty with true devotion, ſhew me the neceſſity and advantage of it; take away that languor which the very thought of prayer is apt to produce in me; and ſhew me, that it is not ſo difficult, ſo tireſome a taſk, as I have repreſented it to myſelf:—I, who till the happy moment of reflection came, knew not, that as in thy houſe there are many manſions, ſo there are different ways of converſing with thee, ſome of which require only the ſincerity of our hearts.

It

It is true, Lord! that the prayer of a devout ſoul, who has withdrawn from the world, and is filled with the comforts of thy holy ſpirit, is like a box of ointment, which, as ſoon as it approaches the fire, ſends forth a fragrant odour; while the groans of a poor penitent, juſt emerged from the fatal gulph of ſin, who as yet but creeps on in the paths of virtue, are like muddy waters, which muſt be philtered and paſs, drop by drop, ere they can be freed from their impurities.

Yet ſince prayer is but a lifting-up our hearts unto thee, in which

we lay before thee our wants, and implore thy help:— ſhe then, who is expoſed to the temptations of the world, the tyranny of her own paſſions, the fatal influence of example, harraſſed by a thouſand miſeries, and ſurrounded by a thouſand dangers; ſhe, is under a more preſſing neceſſity of praying to thee than the cloiſtered virgin, who is fenced round with thy mercies.

Nor is ſhe only under a ſtronger neceſſity; but ſhe is alſo diſpoſed to perform this duty of prayer, with more fervour than one who is habitually devout, becauſe her preſſing wants compel her to look up to thee; for

for if it is natural for the famiſhed wretch to aſk an alms; for a ſick man to implore eaſe; for one in danger to caſt his eyes to heaven for ſuccour; how much more natural is it, for the ſinner to pray unto his God, who is continually expoſed to theſe three calamities; who is always poor, always ſick, and always in danger.

From being neceſſary, oh! let it become my delight; for are not angels thus employed, and bleſſed ſouls made perfect?—Teach me then, o my God! that prayer is a holy and pleaſing converſe between the ſoul and its Creator; a torch, which diſpels the darkneſs of its underſtand-

ing; a glaſs, which truly repreſents all its infirmities; and a precious balſam, which heals all its wounds:

A powerful preacher, who impreſſes the law of God upon our minds; a faithful guide, who conducts us ſafely through the ſtraight way of our ſalvation; a ſweet and refreſhing ſleep, which gives the ſoul ſecure repoſe in the arms of Almighty Providence; a holy joy, which renders ſinful pleaſures nauſeous, and every ſenſual delight inſipid; a comfortable contemplation of our cloſe of life, which tames our appetites with the thoughts of death, which leſſens the terrors of his

his approach with the expectation of an eternal exiſtence;—laſtly, it is the crucifixion of our paſſions, and the reſurrection of grace in our ſouls to all eternity.

MEDITATION and PRAYER the Twenty-firſt.

She laments the dangerous ſplendour of her condition;—ſhe is fearful of falling back into her former ill habits.—Prayer a greater relief to the ſinner, than the conſolations of friendſhip are to the unhappy; becauſe God is all-powerful, to help thoſe that call upon him.

PREPARE then, o my ſoul, for this divine intercourſe; by this thou ſhalt perſevere to the end in virtue, and learn to contemn the

world and its deluſive pleaſures.—Amidſt a crooked and perverſe generation, thou ſhalt preſerve thy integrity;—amidſt the conflict of contending paſſions, thou ſhalt acknowledge the dominion of reaſon;—by prayer thou ſhalt converſe with God, not only as with thy protector and father, but as with thy moſt faithful and affectionate friend; before him, thou ſhalt lay open thoſe paſſions which tyrannize thy mind; thoſe objects that enſlave thy ſenſes; thoſe frailties which humble thee; thoſe ſorrows which conſume, thoſe griefs that rend thee.

For if it is ſoothing to relate our afflictions to our friends, who have

no power to relieve, and can only hear and pity us; how much greater is the comfort, that we are encouraged to pour out our wailings before a merciful God, who, if he pleaſes, can help us; who is often more delighted to ſee a ſoul humbled by a true ſenſe of its unworthineſs, than elated with the inſtances of its virtue?

Incline my will then, o my God! to ſpend ſome moments every day at the footſtool of thy throne; and let me not ſtand gazing on a picture, or repeating my prayers from a book which I do not underſtand; but let the ſubject of my devotions be

my

my own wants, and the infinite mercies of my God.

Oh! how can I meditate with profit on my own vileneſs, when the latent pride that is ſtill lurking in my heart, ſuggeſts a thouſand vain conceits of myſelf, and leſſens every moment that ſalutary remorſe, which would ſave me from new ſins?

Oh! why have I dared to hope that my affections were thoroughly mortified, my ſinful habits ſubdued, when I have not ceaſed to gratify my ambition, by keeping poſſeſſion of honours which I have not deſerved; when the ſound of adulation is ſtill grateful to my ears; when the gay

ſcenes of pomp and pleaſure ſtill delight my eyes?— how can I liſten to thy word, when my attention is engaged by the ſolemn trifles which make the buſineſs of a life of grandeur?— how can I taſte the comforts of thy holy ſpirit, who am aſſaulted by a thouſand paſſions, ſurrounded by a thouſand vanities, which diſtract my thoughts when I come to appear before thee? In this condition what can I do more than groan within myſelf; and, with the Royal Pſalmiſt, complain, that "my feet are hurt with the fetters of ſin," and that I am held captive by my unmortified affections, till the gentle influences of thy grace create in

my

my heart a love of thy law, which alone can ſet me free.

Give me to ſee clearly the deplorable condition I am in, and to diſtinguiſh truly between what the world calls happineſs, and what a ſincere Chriſtian would eſteem ſo.—Remove the miſt of paſſion from my eyes; and, in this pomp that ſurrounds me, I ſhall ſee nothing but meanneſs; in theſe pleaſures that court me, diſappointment and ſorrow; the tongue of flattery pronounces only my diſgrace; the voice of love whiſpers nothing but deſtruction.—My riches are but poverty; my health, diſeaſe:—for guilt has

changed theſe bleſſings into a curſe; ſo that, in the midſt of all my ſeeming proſperity, I may truly ſay with thy Apoſtles, "Lord! ſave me, or I periſh!"

Now then, o Lord! while theſe reflections flaſh conviction upon my mind, let me proſtrate myſelf in the duſt before thee:— let me, with tears, bewail my ſins; and, by awefully meditating on that ſtupendous inſtance of thy mercy, in the redemption of the world, remove theſe dreadful fears of final reprobation!— to that ſecure port, let this poor ſhattered veſſel of my ſoul, toſt by continual tempeſts, haſte for ſhelter;

ſhelter; there anchor, there ſecurely reſt, and look back, with trembling gratitude, upon the devouring gulph it has eſcaped.

MEDITATION and PRAYER the Twenty-ſecond.

How neceſſary it is for a true penitent to have recourſe to God, by frequent prayer; and never to ſuffer any pretence of buſineſs, indiſpoſition, much leſs amuſement, to interrupt his application to this holy exerciſe.

OH! why am I not conſtant in my reſolution, to proſtrate myſelf every day at the footſtool of thy throne, at that appointed time which

which I have conſecrated to thee?— why do I ſuffer the vain ceremonials of this grandeur, which, alas! I have not yet fortitude ſufficient to ſhake off, to divert me from performing ſo indiſpenſable a duty.

Oh! how many difficulties, how many obſtructions, do my own frailty, and the tempter, throw in my way, to prevent my application to this holy exerciſe, ſo neceſſary to my ſalvation!— but I will guard againſt thoſe enſnaring ſuggeſtions.— I will conſtantly throw myſelf at thy feet in whatſoever condition my ſoul may be:— though my heart beat with its uſual paſſions; though my thoughts dwell in ſpite of me on their darling

objects,

objects, yet even thus ſtruggling againſt my rooted habits will I approach thee, to the end that the labour I undergo, theſe painful pangs which I endure, and theſe irkſome attempts I make to pour forth an imperfect prayer, may render it acceptable to thee.

Oh! ſuffer me not to think thou haſt abandoned me, becauſe my mind is ſometimes overwhelmed with a conſciouſneſs of my corruption; becauſe at ſuch a time I cannot form one pious thought: yet even in this wretched condition I will ſtill look up to thee; ſtill pray to thee with what powers of recollection I poſſeſs, and acknowledge with the holy David,

vid, in his humiliation, that I am like a beaſt before thee, without ſpirit, without ſpeech, and without underſtanding.

Though, in ſpite of my beſt endeavours, I cannot perform this duty with a fixed attention of mind, yet will I not depart from the footſtool of thy throne:— my will ſhall pray unto thee; I will rely upon thy mercy; and although thou mayſt not for the preſent unite my ſoul unto thee, by the powerful influence of thy grace, yet will I truſt thy goodneſs will accept of it in this deplorable condition, and eſteem it a teſtimony of its ſincere affection, that it cleaves unto thee, as well when thou art

art pleaſed to withdraw thy comforts, as when it is ſupported by thy divine conſolations.

But, o my God! let me not only pray unto thee with my underſtanding, and with my tongue, but alſo with my heart:—let me not only pray unto thee in my cloſet and in the church, where the conſideration of thy divine preſence animates my devotion; but grant that, by acts of faith, hope, and charity, I may conſecrate to thee the oratory of my heart; where I will offer the ſacrifice of praiſe and thankſgiving: for the piety of a ſincere Chriſtian is not confined to words; his life, if agreeable

agreeable to his profeſſion, is a continual prayer.

Therefore will I pray unto thee, when perplexed with buſineſs, when fatigued with ceremony; even in the midſt of theſe gay ſcenes of ſplendor and diſſipation, to which my irkſome ſtate ſubjects me; even then, retiring into that cloſet of my breaſt, which is dedicated to thee alone, where no eye but thine beholds me, there will I addreſs my ardent ſupplications unto thee.

When new temptations aſſault me, when my own weakneſs makes me dread the combat, when paſſion tyrannizes my heart, and pleaſure

ſpreads

ſpreads her baits to allure me, then will I ſigh moſt fervently unto thee; and, without waiting for a ſuitable place and time, I will inſtantly lay bare the wounds of my ſoul, and implore thy ſuccour.

This ſhall be the beginning and end of all my actions,; when the morning dawns, and when the night cloſes, upon me; in the midſt of my journeys, my heart ſhall take thee for its polar ſtar; ſhall apply to thee in every difficulty, truſt to thee in every danger, yield itſelf up to thy conduct, and conſtantly implore the aſſiſtance of thy grace:— and this may be done with the more eaſe, becauſe I ſhall better expreſs my own wants,

wants, and my entire dependance on thy mercy, by one ſingle ſigh which proceeds from the bottom of my oppreſſed heart, than by the moſt prolix devotions.

I will join with thy ſaints in thy ſanctuary, and pray to thee with my lips, and with my voice; I will alſo pray unto thee in ſilence, with ſighs and groans unutterable:—to thee only will I look up for help in danger; in pain and ſickneſs, thou only ſhalt be my comfort; in diſtreſs and ſorrow, my only refuge; the pleaſing of thee ſhall be the only object of all my thoughts, words, and actions, and, like holy David, I will have thee always before my eyes.

MEDITATION and PRAYER the Twenty-third.

How terrible to a ſinner the thoughts of death:—how full of comfort to a ſincere penitent, who has forſaken all his evil ways, and relies on God for pardon and mercy.

HOW ſtrange, how inconſiſtent do thoſe perſons appear to me, who never practiſe that holieſt and moſt neceſſary of all Chriſtian duties, prayer!—that duty by which they are enabled to perform all the others, and to work out their own ſalvation; and

and yet these very persons sometimes reflect to what end a rational soul was given them, and their claim to dominion over the rest of the creation; who acknowledge that there is a God, at least are convinced that none but fools doubt of it. These persons indeed have the clouds of their understandings dispelled by the light of this indubitable truth; yet suffer themselves to be presently blinded by the glaring vanities of the world;—surely a soul in this world, without reflection, without prayer, and without reliance upon God's providence, is like a ship in the midst of a tempest without a pilot; like a traveller in a strange country, without either guide or compass, who the faster he

walks wanders the further from his home.

For how can he work out his ſalvation, who has not God in all his thoughts?—how can he obſerve his laws and obey his commandments, who never thinks on them?—how can he reſtrain his paſſions without the aſſiſtance of God's grace; and how can he obtain this grace, when he will not be at the trouble to aſk it?—how can he avoid falling into deſpair, who continues in a ſinful courſe of life; who either uſes the moſt abſurd means imaginable to ſtill his conſcience, by ſtifling the thoughts of eternity and a God, or elſe does not put his truſt in that God, nor hope for that eternity. Can he be

a Chriſtian,

a Chriſtian, who does not meditate on the life, the actions, and the goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt, and, above all, on his ineſtimable love in the ſacrifice of his own ſacred ſelf for wretched ſinners.

O Lord! ſince I am convinced that prayer, which is nothing but the lifting up of our ſouls unto thee, is ſo eaſy, ſo neceſſary, and ſo profitable a duty; ſince I am aſſured by thy holy word, and the examples of pious men, that it is a floating plank which will bear up my ſoul upon the waves of this vaſt ocean of life, and through all its ſtorms and tempeſts convey it ſafe into the bleſſed haven of eternity.— Give me an earneſt

deſire to pray to thee; let me find delight in it; let it be as pleaſant and familiar to me as ever the vanities of the world have been, for the enjoyment of which I have ſo often hazarded my ſalvation; and ſince death, which is inevitable, is the moſt uſeful ſubject of our meditations, grant, O my God! that I may daily and hourly conſider my laſt end, when my breath ſhall go forth; when I ſhall return to the earth, and all my thoughts periſh.

Let me inceſſantly think on that time, which will come like a thief in the night, when there will be no ſpace for repentance; that time upon which

which depend the happineſs and miſery of our eternal exiſtence.

O Death! how dreadful are thy approaches to thoſe perſons who never thought of thee, but placed all their felicity in the enjoyment of this life?—o Death! how terrible art thou to thoſe men to whom thou art the end of happineſs, and the beginning of ſorrow.

By thee they will be deprived of what they conſidered as their only bliſs, the enjoyment of this world; of that body which they idolized, of thoſe voluptuous gratifications, thoſe ſenſual pleaſures, which employed all their faculties. O death! from which

even the virtuous ſhrink with fear, how terrible wilt thou be to thoſe who never knew God, but to offend him?

In thoſe tremendous moments, what will the hardened ſinner feel at the thoughts of eternity? he who never purſued any other happineſs, but what this life afforded; who never began the great work of repentance till he was no longer able to ſin, and was rendered incapable of receiving the impreſſions of any other paſſion but fear!

O eternity, eternity! how full of unutterable horror are the thoughts of thee to one who beholds hell opening

opening to receive him; who dares not hope in God's mercy, and would think himſelf ſufficiently happy could he but have the ſame end with the beaſts that periſh!

But, oh! how awefully tranſporting are the thoughts of eternity to him who, in this tranſitory world, has walked in the fear of God; who has inceſſantly endeavoured to reſtrain his paſſions, to mortify his corrupt affections; who has truly repented of his ſins, and has a ſure foundation of hope in the merits of his Redeemer!

To him who has accuſtomed himſelf to die daily; who has forſaken the

the world, and all its vanities, before he is compelled to it by the unalterable law of nature; who ſincerely loves God, and, even in this life, enjoys the earneſt of eternal happineſs!

MEDI-

MEDITATION and PRAYER the Twenty-fourth.

She acknowledges the great mercies of God in thoſe trials to which he had been pleaſed to call her; and making a ſolemn covenant with herſelf, to forſake her ſins, ſhe fervently prays that God will enable her by his grace, to perſevere in her reſolution.

O LORD! who, in the working of thy miracles, haſt always regard to ſome great end; haſt thou not recalled me from the gates of death, and reſtored my health, that thou

thou mayſt accompliſh the bleſſed purpoſes of thy grace upon me; that, by a thorough converſion of my heart to thee, I might paſs from that licentious ſtate, which the Royal Prophet juſtly ſtyles the terrors of hell, to ſuch a religious courſe of life as thoſe devout ſouls led, who did not preſume upon thy mercy, without fearing thy juſtice, and thence find excuſes to defer their repentance to their laſt moments.

Yes, Lord! I acknowledge thy mercies in the midſt of thy judgements; and in my afflictions, as in my proſperity, I perceive the bleſſed intervention of thy providence.

And

And therefore, that I may maintain an inviolable fidelity towards thee, for the future; that I may ſerve thee, that I may love thee, and rather die a thouſand times than return to my former ſinful courſe of life, I have written this paper, with my own hand, as a regiſter of thy mercies, thy adorable truths, and my moſt ſolemn reſolutions: that, if at any time I ſhould relapſe into my former errors, I may hereby be reminded of my duty, and that model of holy living I have reſolved on; if my faith ſhould falter, my hope ſhould languiſh, or my charity grow cold, and my corrupt paſſions and evil habits again ſtruggle to gain an aſcendency

cendency over me; the reading of theſe prayers, and the contemplation of thy bounty and grace, which gave me the will and the means of repentance, might reduce them to their former temper.

That if at any time I ſhould forget thoſe agonizing terrors which ſhook my ſoul, when, juſt on the verge of life, I expected the final ſentence of my offended God, I may recollect myſelf, by reading theſe reflections, which I have written upon that bed of ſickneſs, where the divines, on one ſide, and the phyſicians, on the other, by their dreadful ſilence, ſeemed to deſpair both of my life and my ſalvation.

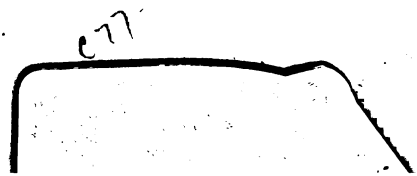
O God!

O God! in whoſe hands are my ſoul and my eternal happineſs; who didſt reprieve me from the grave, and crown me with thy mercies; who didſt fill my ſoul with holy deſires; who haſt renewed my age as that of an eagle; who haſt promiſed that thy anger ſhalt not endure for ever againſt thoſe who fear thee; that thou wilt not puniſh them according to their deſerts, but wilt put away their offences as far as the eaſt is from the weſt; who aſſureſt us, that, like as a father pitieth his children, ſo thou wilt have compaſſion on us; becauſe thou knoweſt our weakneſs, and that we are but duſt; that our moſt ſteady reſolutions are but as a

traveller

traveller who tarrieth but a night, and as the morning dew, which ſoon paſſeth away; who worketh good out of the evil of our ſins, and who alone can convert us. I beſeech thee, therefore, to preſerve me from returning guilt; becauſe my ſoul is humbled, and overwhelmed with ſhame and grief, for having diſpleaſed thee; becauſe my ſoul puts its truſt in thee, and languiſhes for the enjoyment of thy holy preſence.—Oh! hear my humble ſupplications, heavenly Father, ſince I have made thee the only object of my love, and that thy mercy is over all thy works!—o Lord! have compaſſion on me, for I am poor and miſerable, and thou art infinitely rich and merciful!

THE END.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